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**Brucellosis**

# **Certified-Free Herd**

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# A Certified Brucellosis-Free Cattle Herd Makes Sense

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Having a certified brucellosis-free cattle herd can mean worthwhile benefits for you as an owner. Just knowing your herd is free of this disease is reassuring for beef and milk producers alike.

Cattle with brucellosis have abortions and breeding problems. You lose profits from reduced calf crops and lower milk yields. If allowed to go unchecked, such losses can put you out of business.

Certification also has certain marketing advantages—especially in States or areas where pre-movement tests are required to sell beef breeding cattle and dairy herd replacements. You can move or sell cattle from certified brucellosis-free herds without testing them first. Also, you're likely to get better prices for your cattle.

If these benefits appeal to you, discuss certification with your veterinarian or State-Federal animal health officials. In most cases, testing to certify a herd is at the owner's expense. But in areas where extensive testing is being done by State-Federal officials, the first herd blood test may be free.

The usual method of certifying is by herd blood test. There's an alternate method, however, for initially certifying a dairy herd. Both methods are discussed below.

## Herd Blood Test Method

1. Blood test all cattle in your herd except for: steers and spayed heifers; calves under 6 months of age; official vaccinates under 24 months of age if beef breeds, under 20 months if dairy breeds.
2. Retest herd (same exclusions) between 10 and 14 months after the first test. This test date becomes the anniversary date for annual recertification.
3. Repeat herd test annually.
4. All additions must be from a certified herd, from a free area, or tested and found negative within 30 days before entry in your herd. These additions then must be retested between 60 and 120 days after they enter your herd.

## Alternate Method for Initially Certifying a Dairy Herd

1. Minimum of three consecutive negative milk ring tests, at intervals of 90 days or more.
2. Blood test all cattle (same exclusions as listed above) within 90 days after the last negative milk ring test. This test date becomes the anniversary date for annual recertification.
3. Repeat blood test annually.
4. All additions must be from a certified herd, from a free area, or tested and found negative within 30 days before entry in your herd. These additions then must be retested between 60 and 120 days after they enter your herd.

## If Infection Is Found

Of course, herd tests may reveal infection. As a herd owner, it's decidedly to your advantage, however, to know if brucellosis is present so steps can be taken to control and eliminate it. The advice of a practicing or government veterinarian can spare you far more serious losses.

If brucellosis is found, your herd is quarantined. A state or federal veterinary medical officer will draw up a plan with you for eliminating infection—with the help of your own veterinarian, if you like. Periodic testing is conducted at government expense until all reactors are identified and removed. Cleanup often can be hastened by vaccination and other sound management practices. An indemnity is paid for each reactor to help compensate you for disease losses.

The last herd test required to free a herd of brucellosis can serve as the first test toward certification.

Having a certified brucellosis-free herd makes real sense—especially for the professional cattle producer or dairyman. For more information, contact your veterinarian, or State-Federal animal health officials.

